

**MINUTES
STATE PRESERVES ADVISORY BOARD
JULY 2, 2004**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Neil Bernstein, Chair
Robin Fortney
Timothy Sproul
Scott Moats
Liz Christiansen
Laura Jackson

STAFF PRESENT

John Pearson
Daryl Howell

ADVISORS PRESENT

Bob McKay
Kathy Gourley
Paul Christiansen

BOARD TOUR

The Board visited two sites nominated for preserve status on Thursday, July 1. The field trip began at 1:00 PM. Sites visited included Stainbrook State Preserve, a site in Lake MacBride State Park, and a site on private land. The field trip was open to the public.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Neil Bernstein called the meeting to order at 8:35 AM on July 2, 2004 at the F.W. Kent Park Education Center.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

- Change: Neil suggested that we move Item 10 – Preserves Visits after Item 6 – Gitche Manitou.
- Add: Item 11a – Grant Proposal (Laura Jackson)
- Add: Item 8b – Rockford Site (Neil Bernstein)

<p><i>Motion was made by Robin Fortney to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Liz Christiansen. Motion carried unanimously.</i></p>

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Presented the State Preserves Board minutes from the April 2, 2004 meeting.

Motion was made by Tim Sproul to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Laura Jackson. Motion carried unanimously.

Neil Bernstein presented Kathy Gourley with a plaque for her six years of service on the board. Kathy's term expired on June 30, 2004. She will now serve as an advisor to the preserves board.

LAMSON WOODS

A walking trail through the northeast part of Lamson Woods has been proposed to connect with a new trail outside of the Preserve. This mowed walking trail would be located on land that state (through IDOT) already has an easement on and would be maintained by the landowner, Mr. Neff and by the Jefferson County Trails Council.

John Pearson said a species study was done of the area by Laura McCormick. She did find a couple species of interest, one being the pagoda plant which is noted on our threatened species list and other is ulophus, a small woodland plant.

Neil Bernstein said that he is in favor of tentatively approving the trail as long as there is a management plan in place on preserving the trail with special attention to the species issue.

Signage was suggested to be put in place at all of the trailheads informing users of the invasive species.

Motion was made by Liz Christiansen to move forward with the proposed trail plans but to include a management plan focusing on controlling invasive species, management of the natural community with special attention to the rare plants that exist within the preserve itself. Seconded by Robin Fortney. Motion carried unanimously.

PRESERVE NOMINATION UPDATES

Banister-McGregor Woods – Dean Roosa is preparing the draft management plan for the proposed preserve. The final draft will be ready for the October Preserves Board Meeting.

Hartman Bluff – Dedication papers have been signed by the County Conservation Board, Board of Supervisors and Preserves Board Chairman. Awaiting Governor's signature, possibly in August.

Baylor Property – John Pearson received a letter from Jim Baylor stating his discomfort with the idea of the permanency of a state preserve. A draft management plan has been generated, but waiting for approval from the Baylor's.

Glenwood Property – Kathy Gourley stated that she plans to fulfill her commitment to complete the first draft of the management plan.

Hawkeye Wildlife Area – Neil Bernstein said that Tom Madsen has been doing plant surveys on the two sites visited at the last preserve tour.

Rock Island – Tom Madsen provided a progress report on his flora inventory of the area adjacent to Rock Island Preserve. To date, Tom has documented over 500 species from the entire site including the privately owned land, original preserve and the proposed addition. 450 of those are native species.

<i>Information Only</i>

BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2005

Liz Christiansen said that the Preserves Board budget has been increased by \$5,000, which brings the total budget to \$35,000. Liz will continue with her commitment in seeking other alternatives for budget increases in the future.

<i>Information Only</i>

GITCHIE MANITOU

Vandalism and illegal use of the property continues to be a problem at the preserve. The Sioux Falls YMCA contacted the DNR about holding their summer activities at Gitchie Manitou; a Care, Maintenance and License Agreement was signed between the DNR and the YMCA.

John Pearson suggested terminating the agreement since it has not been beneficial in keeping vandals out of the preserve. This is mainly due to the fact that the YMCA only utilizes the preserve during the day and most vandalism occurs at night. Road barriers have been put in place but people still break through or go around.

Paul Christiansen suggested looking into having the DNR's Park enforcement staff to help police the area throughout the night.

Robin Fortney suggested creating a Friends group for this preserve.

Liz Christiansen stressed that enforcement should be increased during the evenings.

<i>Information Only</i>

PRESERVE VISITS

Neil Bernstein visited the following preserves:

Williams Prairie – looked fine, sign could be improved

Malanaphy Springs – looked fine, lovely place

Silver Lake – doing fine, very well-used

Freda Haffner Kettle Hole – looks fine

Cayler Prairie – now has a wind farm to the west

Anderson Prairie – Ember Hall, a researcher has found great snake data.

Kalsow Prairie – looks fine

Ocheydan Mound – a local religious group has been making messages on the hill from rocks. John Pearson said that he would check into this.

St. James – in some places the structure is falling apart. (roof and floor)
Currently, there is no friends group to manage this site.

Stinson Prairie – Neil received an e-mail from Dennis Schlicht and Frank Olson, stating their concern that the 32 acre prairie was burned as one unit simultaneously this spring, which they confirmed with the local manager of the conservation board. Neil followed up with Steve Hendericks, a bee surveyor who said that after burning more flowering occurs which attracts more bees.

Neil Bernstein asked John Pearson to inform preserve managers to burn in units and not the whole area at once.

Robin Fortney asked about management plans for preserves that currently do not have one. How can we make the process happen to provide managers with a management plan?

John Pearson said that he, Daryl Howell, and Dean Roosa wrote management plans for the DNR-owned lands.

Neil Bernstein said that there has been a form made to help document what has been done on the preserve and what needs to be done. This will be e-mailed to board members for discussion at the next meeting.

Scott Moats visited the following preserves:

Freda-Haffner – didn't burn last fall or spring, due to weather conditions.
The overall condition of the preserve is not very healthy looking.

Anderson Prairie – had a good fall burn, good management going on

Cayler – Overall condition is not very healthy looking

Five Ridge Prairie – burning too frequently

Robin Fortney visited the following preserve:

Searryl's Cave – looks fine

Laura Jackson visited the following preserve:

Mann Wilderness – did not see invasive species or trash, looked well used.

No signage for the preserve. Great flowers.

Sand Prairie

Bob McKay visited the following preserve:

Steele Prairie - Soil testing will take place later this year, since it has been too wet. There is a lot of reed canary grass.

SCENIC PRESERVE

A draft report of the scenic preserve study was e-mailed to board members. Written comments will be accepted until July 30. Possible study areas to apply the criteria will be considered. This will come before the board for action at the next meeting in October.

<i>Information Only</i>

ROCKFORD FOSSIL AND PRAIRIE SITE

Doug Schroeder, Director of the Floyd County Conservation requested preserve status for the Rockford Fossil and Prairie Park, 1 mile west of Rockford, Iowa.

The county conservation board is excited and in favor of designating this site as a preserve.

The original 186 acres park has grown to include an additional 81.26 of virgin prairie and oak/walnut woods purchased from Joel and Joyce Hanes, 26 acres of riparian, and a 50 acre wetland mitigation site which the IDOR will transfer ownership of this year. Today, the park includes a fossil quarry, virgin prairie, juniper hill, bee-hive kilns from the Rockford Brick and Tile, visitor center filled with museum quality exhibits, picnic shelter and numerous hiking trails.

The park is a significant geological, paleontological, botanical and historical site in Iowa. Over 55 acres of virgin prairie exist within the park and natural succession is adding more as the prairie is slowly creeping in and re-vegetating the old quarry. The prairie hosts numerous rare species, some of which are listed at state endangered or threatened. The following is list of species identified from the site but not limited to those as an extensive inventory has not been done in the park.

Endangered species:

1. Northern harrier, *Circus cyaneus* (bird)
2. Bald eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* (bird)

Threatened species:

1. Henslow's sparrow, *Ammodramus henslowii* (bird)
2. Creeping Juniper, *Juniperus horizontalis* (plant)

Special concern:

1. Smooth green snake, *Opheodrys vernalis* (reptile)
2. Bullsnaek, *Pituophis catenifer sayi* (reptile)
3. Regal fritillary, *Speyeria idalia* (butterfly)
4. Valerian, *Vallaria edulis* (plant)

It is the goal of the Conservation Board to continue to use this resource as an outdoor classroom educating the public about its unique and rare features while also instilling a sense of conservation and preservation. We hope that by designating this park as a preserve will give visitor's another level of appreciation for the land.

<i>Information Only</i>

RESEARCH REQUESTS GRANTED

Cathy Henry, Resource Biologist with the Driftless Area National Wildlife Refuge, will be continue monitoring studies for the Iowa Pleistocene snail and northern monkshood at Bixby, White Pine Hollow, and Roberts Creek preserves.

Jerry Selby, butterfly expert, is conducting a survey for the Dakota skipper in northwest Iowa for the DNR. Survey sites include Cayler, Freda Haffner, Kalsow, and Steele state preserves.

Adam Wallner, University of Illinois, is collecting leafhoppers, planthoppers, and spittlebugs at Cayler Prairie and Hayden Prairie. The study is being conducted in several states to determine if these insect groups can be used to determine habitat quality of prairie areas.

Steve Hendrix, University of Iowa, is sampling bees at Doolittle, Steele, Kalsow, Anderson, Cayler, Stinson and Hayden Prairie state preserves as continuation and expansion of last year's project.

Hartman Bluff Preserve, Bill Watson has proposed to do the inventory at Hartman Preserve, however; Vern has inquired enough funding independently to complete have Bill Watson complete the comprehensive floristic inventory of the entire Hartman preserve property and also paying attention to Hartman Bluff.

<i>Motion was made by Laura Jackson to approve the research requests as presented. Seconded by Scott Moats. Motion carried.</i>
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VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

In cooperation with Sierra Club chapters, workdays to pull garlic mustard were conducted at Brush Creek Canyon on Saturday, May 22, 10AM. and White Pine Hollow on May 23, 1 PM. Both events were successful, though we barely scratched the surface.

RESEARCH AND INVENTORY PROJECTS

Contracts for the eight projects selected by the Board have been prepared and sent to contractors for signature.

GRANT UPDATE

Laura Jackson said that we were not awarded the grant to do an assessment of state preserves, other state wildlife areas and parks, to look at threats to protected areas and management issues associated with protected areas. The grant would have also included researching our current level of protection and management to see if it is sufficient to protect biodiversity in the state. There is still opportunity to receive this grant, but currently it has been put on hold.

<i>Information Only</i>

OPEN DISCUSSION

Neil Bernstein said that we need give feedback to the individuals requesting preserve nominations for Sandy Beach, property near Lake McBride and Sand Woods, a privately owned site.

John Pearson mentioned that siltation is occurring and is a problem at Lake McBride. This could result in rising water levels. John suggested including provision for flooding in particular preserve sites, since that is not currently addressed.

It was agreed to move forward with a plant, reptile and vegetation survey at Sand Woods.

Neil Bernstein encouraged Tom Madsen to continue his plant surveying at both Lake McBride sites and the Hawkeye Wildlife area.

NEXT MEETING

The next Preserves Board meeting will be held on October 8, 2004 in Floyd County at the conservation visitor center. The Board will visit the Rockford fossil site the afternoon of October 7th.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the State Preserves Advisory Board, Chairperson Neil Bernstein adjourned the meeting at 12:20 PM on July 2, 2004.

<i>Motion was made by Robin Fortney to adjourn. Seconded by Laura Jackson. Motion carried.</i>

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